

### **Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

### **Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method in a data processing system for providing a consulting assessment environment, the method comprising:

a memory having a plurality of software instructions stored therein, the plurality of software instructions adapted to cause a processor of a computer to perform the steps of:

determining an intended use for the consulting assessment environment, wherein the intended use is one of defining assessment business logic and conducting a self-assessment, wherein defining assessment business logic is performed by a consultant, wherein conducting a self-assessment is performed by the consultant or a client, and wherein self-assessment ~~assessment~~ data is stored separately from the assessment business logic;

responsive to determining that the intended use is defining assessment business logic, defining a data template, an assessment framework template, a suggested actions template, and a report template to ~~provide~~ create the assessment business logic for multiple types of assessments for assessing businesses, further comprising:

encoding the data template, the assessment framework template, the suggested actions template, and the report template with formulas and logic rule definitions to define how self-assessment data is used to generate assessment results and recommendations;

translating a plurality of hypotheses into interview questions for assessing a current state of a business; and

~~wherein encoding~~ proprietary information and trade secrets ~~are encoded~~ into the data template, the assessment framework template, the suggested actions template, and the report template, ~~[[and]]~~ wherein the proprietary information and the trade secrets of the consulting assessment environment are accessible to the consultant and are made inaccessible to clients using a hiding feature;

responsive to determining that the intended use ~~[[used]]~~ is conducting a self-assessment, receiving the self-assessment data about ~~[[a]]~~ the business through a questionnaire, wherein the

questionnaire is defined [[by]] using the data template encoded with the interview questions and business-related domain knowledge of business practices;

responsive to receiving the self-assessment data about the business, computing at least one assessment score based on the formulas and the logic rule definitions [[rules]] encoded in the assessment framework template;

responsive to computing the at least one assessment score, determining an appropriate action based on the at least one assessment score and the suggested actions template encoded with business-related domain knowledge that defines actions to achieve desired states of businesses; and

reporting results of the self-assessment ~~assessment~~ data based on the at least one assessment score and the appropriate action in accordance with the report template, wherein the data template, the assessment framework template, and the suggested actions template encode business-related domain knowledge including at least one of best practices, business consultant expertise, and business goals, and wherein the proprietary information and the trade secrets of the consulting assessment environment are hidden from the client.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

determining [[a]] the current state of the business based on the self-assessment data;

identifying a desired state for the business using the assessment framework template and the suggested actions template to analyze the self-assessment data and to determine new business insights and recommendations for the business; and

performing a gap analysis between the current state of the business and the desired state of the business to determine the appropriate action to achieve the desired state for the business using the suggested actions template.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

identifying benefits and risks for the current state of the business and for moving to a desired state of the business based on the at least one assessment score and the appropriate action.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
consolidating portions of the results together for further analysis, wherein the appropriate action is determined for a particular division or unit of the business.
5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
providing an interface for the client to conduct the self-assessment to gather the self-assessment data about the business, wherein the self-assessment data is used to determine [[a]] the current state of the business, and wherein automated data synthesis is performed to relate the current state of the business to a desired state of the business in real time.
6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the data template includes at least one of the interview questions, weighing factors, desired states, benefit descriptions, risk descriptions, suggested actions, cost areas, and terminology.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the assessment framework template includes at least one of scoring information, calculations, suggested actions logic, benefit and risk logic, user feedback, and user input.
- 8-20. (Canceled)
21. (New) A computer program product in a computer readable storage medium for providing a consulting assessment environment, the computer program product comprising:  
computer usable program code stored in the computer readable storage medium, wherein the computer usable program code is adapted to cause a processor in a computer to perform steps comprising:  
determining an intended use for the consulting assessment environment, wherein the intended use is one of defining assessment business logic and conducting a self-assessment, wherein defining assessment business logic is performed by a consultant, wherein conducting a self-assessment is performed by the consultant or a client, and wherein self-assessment data is stored separately from the assessment business logic;

responsive to determining that the intended use is defining assessment business logic, defining a data template, an assessment framework template, a suggested actions template, and a report template to create the assessment business logic for multiple types of assessments for assessing businesses, further comprising:

encoding the data template, the assessment framework template, the suggested actions template, and the report template with formulas and logic rule definitions to define how self-assessment data is used to generate assessment results and recommendations;

translating a plurality of hypotheses into interview questions for assessing a current state of a business; and

encoding proprietary information and trade secrets into the data template, the assessment framework template, the suggested actions template, and the report template, wherein the proprietary information and the trade secrets of the consulting assessment environment are accessible to the consultant and are made inaccessible to clients using a hiding feature;

responsive to determining that the intended use is conducting a self-assessment, receiving the self-assessment data about the business through a questionnaire, wherein the questionnaire is defined using the data template encoded with the interview questions and business-related domain knowledge of business practices;

responsive to receiving the self-assessment data about the business, computing at least one assessment score based on the formulas and the logic rule definitions encoded in the assessment framework template;

responsive to computing the at least one assessment score, determining an appropriate action based on the at least one assessment score and the suggested actions template encoded with business-related domain knowledge that defines actions to achieve desired states of businesses; and

reporting results of the self-assessment data based on the at least one assessment score and the appropriate action in accordance with the report template, wherein the data template, the assessment framework template, and the suggested actions template encode business-related domain knowledge including at least one of best practices, business consultant expertise, and business goals, and wherein the proprietary information and the trade secrets of the consulting assessment environment are hidden from the client.

22. (New) The computer program product of claim 21 further comprising:  
determining the current state of the business based on the self-assessment data;  
identifying a desired state for the business using the assessment framework template and the suggested actions template to analyze the self-assessment data and to determine new business insights and recommendations for the business; and  
performing a gap analysis between the current state of the business and the desired state of the business to determine the appropriate action to achieve the desired state for the business using the suggested actions template.
23. (New) The computer program product of claim 21 further comprising:  
identifying benefits and risks for the current state of the business and for moving to a desired state of the business based on the at least one assessment score and the appropriate action.
24. (New) The computer program product of claim 21 further comprising:  
consolidating portions of the results together for further analysis, wherein the appropriate action is determined for a particular division or unit of the business.
25. (New) The computer program product of claim 21 further comprising:  
providing an interface for the client to conduct the self-assessment to gather the self-assessment data about the business, wherein the self-assessment data is used to determine the current state of the business, and wherein automated data synthesis is performed to relate the current state of the business to a desired state of the business in real time.
26. (New) The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the data template includes at least one of the interview questions, weighing factors, desired states, benefit descriptions, risk descriptions, suggested actions, cost areas, and terminology.

27. (New) The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the assessment framework template includes at least one of scoring information, calculations, suggested actions logic, benefit and risk logic, user feedback, and user input.

28. (New) An apparatus for providing a consulting assessment environment, the apparatus comprising:

- a processor, and instructions stored in a memory, wherein the instructions are adapted to cause the processor to perform a plurality of steps comprising:

- determining an intended use for the consulting assessment environment, wherein the intended use is one of defining assessment business logic and conducting a self-assessment, wherein defining assessment business logic is performed by a consultant, wherein conducting a self-assessment is performed by the consultant or a client, and wherein self-assessment data is stored separately from the assessment business logic;

- responsive to determining that the intended use is defining assessment business logic, defining a data template, an assessment framework template, a suggested actions template, and a report template to create the assessment business logic for multiple types of assessments for assessing businesses, further comprising:

- encoding the data template, the assessment framework template, the suggested actions template, and the report template with formulas and logic rule definitions to define how self-assessment data is used to generate assessment results and recommendations;

- translating a plurality of hypotheses into interview questions for assessing a current state of a business; and

- encoding proprietary information and trade secrets into the data template, the assessment framework template, the suggested actions template, and the report template, wherein the proprietary information and the trade secrets of the consulting assessment environment are accessible to the consultant and are made inaccessible to clients using a hiding feature;

- responsive to determining that the intended use is conducting a self-assessment, receiving the self-assessment data about the business through a questionnaire, wherein the questionnaire is defined using the data template encoded with the interview questions and business-related domain knowledge of business practices;

responsive to receiving the self-assessment data about the business, computing at least one assessment score based on the formulas and the logic rule definitions encoded in the assessment framework template;

responsive to computing the at least one assessment score, determining an appropriate action based on the at least one assessment score and the suggested actions template encoded with business-related domain knowledge that defines actions to achieve desired states of businesses; and

reporting results of the self-assessment data based on the at least one assessment score and the appropriate action in accordance with the report template, wherein the data template, the assessment framework template, and the suggested actions template encode business-related domain knowledge including at least one of best practices, business consultant expertise, and business goals, and wherein the proprietary information and the trade secrets of the consulting assessment environment are hidden from the client.

29. (New) The apparatus of claim 28 further comprising:

determining the current state of the business based on the self-assessment data;

identifying a desired state for the business using the assessment framework template and the suggested actions template to analyze the self-assessment data and to determine new business insights and recommendations for the business; and

performing a gap analysis between the current state of the business and the desired state of the business to determine the appropriate action to achieve the desired state for the business using the suggested actions template.

30. (New) The apparatus of claim 28 further comprising:

identifying benefits and risks for the current state of the business and for moving to a desired state of the business based on the at least one assessment score and the appropriate action.

31. (New) The apparatus of claim 28 further comprising:

consolidating portions of the results together for further analysis, wherein the appropriate action is determined for a particular division or unit of the business.

32. (New) The apparatus of claim 28 further comprising:  
providing an interface for the client to conduct the self-assessment to gather the self-assessment data about the business, wherein the self-assessment data is used to determine the current state of the business, and wherein automated data synthesis is performed to relate the current state of the business to a desired state of the business in real time.
33. (New) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the data template includes at least one of the interview questions, weighing factors, desired states, benefit descriptions, risk descriptions, suggested actions, cost areas, and terminology.
34. (New) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the assessment framework template includes at least one of scoring information, calculations, suggested actions logic, benefit and risk logic, user feedback, and user input.